Patent Claims

1. Device for processing and printing information, comprising

-- one or more information storage devices;

-- at least one search device (1) for searching the information stored in the
5 information storage device or devices (2);

-- a printer device (3) for printing a printed copy that contains the
information identified by the search device (1), whereby
the information storage device or devices (2), the search device (1) and the
printer device (3) are connected to one another via a data network (4), and
10 the search device (1) comprises a search criterion module (8) for the input
of search terms and a print copy scope module (9) for defining the scope
of the print copy, so that the search can be implemented according to the
criterion of the search terms that have been input and the given scope of
the print copy.

15 2. Device according to claim 1, whereby a formatting device (6) for formatting the
information identified with the search device (1) for the printout at the printer device
(7) [...].

3. Device according to claim 2, whereby the printer device is fashioned as printing
station (3) in which the formatting device (6) and a printer (7) are integrated.

20 4. Device according to claim 3, whereby the printing station (3) comprises an
accounting module (5) for billing the usage fees for the use of the information stores.

5. Device according to one of the claims 1 through 4, whereby the data network (4) is
the Internet or an Intranet.

6. Device according to one of the claims 1 through 4, whereby the data network (4) is
25 an area network.

7. Device according to one of the claims 1 through 6, whereby at least one of the information stores (2) contains a data bank.

8. Method for processing and printing information that comprises the following steps:

-- searching the information at a search station (1) that is connected via a

5 data network (4) to one or more information storage devices (2);

-- formatting the searched information in a form suitable for a printer device (3);

-- printing the information at the printer device (3) for produce a printed product, whereby

10 the information stored in the information storage device (2) or in the information storage devices (2) are searched according to the criterion of search terms prescribed by the user as well as according to a scope of the print product defined by the user.

9. Method according to claim 8, whereby a lower and an upper limit value for the data quantity to be searched is defined according to the criterion of the defined scope of the

15 print product; and

the searched data quantity is set such that it lies between the two limit values.

10. Method according to claim 9, whereby the lower limit value is approximately 10% through 20% smaller than the upper limit value.

11. Method according to claim 8 or 10, whereby, following implementation of the

20 search at the search station (1), a cost message about the anticipated costs of the print copy is output (S7), whereupon the user can confirm an order (S8).

12. Method according to one of the claims 8 through 11, whereby the print copy is bound (S13).

13. Method according to one of the claims 8 through 12, whereby the scope of the

25 search defined by the scope of the print product is set such that further search results

identified after complete exhaustion of the search scope are not taken into consideration.

14. Method according to one of the claims 8 through 13, whereby match criteria of the individual results are determined in the search event, said match criteria being

5   proportional to the hit precision, whereby the individual results having a low match criterion are not taken into consideration in the compilation of the final search result.

15. Method according to one of the claims 8 through 14, whereby ambiguities of the search terms are automatically excluded in the search event in order to achieve a search with a small data quantity or synonyms of the search terms are taken into

10   consideration for achieving a larger data quantity of the search result.

16. Method according to one of the claims 8 through 15, whereby, following an interrogation of the information stores with the given search terms, the identified search results are sent completely from the information stores to the search station (1) from which the interrogation was generated.

15   17. Method according to claim 16, whereby the search results are evaluated in the search station (1), i.e. that, for example, their data quantity, the match criteria and the like are identified.

18. Method according to one of the claims 8 through 15, whereby, following the interrogation of the individual information storage devices (2) with the search terms

20   prescribed by the user, the information storage device (2) send [sic] a message to the search station (1) by which the search had been generated, whereby the message contains a particular about the identified data quantity, the anticipated costs and/or a match criterion for the individual results, but the information to be printed are not contained therein.

19. Method according to claim 18, whereby, after an order confirmation (S80 has been placed, the print information are sent directly from the information storage device (2) to the printer device (3).

20. Method according to one of the claims 8 through 19, whereby an input mask that
5   comprises a plurality of pairs of fields is displayed at the search station for inputting the search terms, whereby the search criterion can be input in one field of the pairs of fields, and the search term for the input search criterion can be input in the other of the two fields.

21. Method according to claim 20, whereby the fields of the search terms are
10   fundamentally operated with a logical "and" operation, and at least one further fields is provided with which the logical "and" operation can be modified into a logical "or" operation.